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Board OKs YVEDDI funding application

By: Keith Strange Staff Reporter

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DOBSON — The Surry County Board of Commissioners has given formal approval that will allow the Yadkin Valley Economic Development District, Inc., to apply for nearly \$200,000 in state transportation funding.

The action came as the board met for its regularly scheduled meeting in the commissioner's meeting room of the County Government Center in Dobson.

Addressing the board on the proposed application prior to a public hearing on the initiative, YVEDDI Transportation Director Jeff Cockerham said the funding is part of a state allocation to the county.

"Each year, the North Carolina Department of Transportation distributes these grant funds to the county," he told the board. "The purpose is to provide needed transportation assistance funds to counties for things like medical appointments and job training."

Cockerham told the board that the funding is divided into three pools that are earmarked for critical medical transportation, general medical assistance for the elderly and the disabled, and a smaller general purpose fund.

He said this year, the county received an allocation of \$192,934 from the Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) funds, up a couple of percent from previous years.

"The YVEDDI Board of Directors and our ROAP committee have both reviewed and approved the application," Cockerham said.

The funding will be used to augment YVEDDI's existing funding for transportation services in the region and will be distributed to the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program (\$74,192), the Employment Transportation Assistance Program (\$19,275), and the Rural General Public Program (\$99,467).

No one spoke during a public hearing on the measure.

Following the closure of the hearing, the application unanimously was approved on a motion by Commissioner Paul Johnson and with a second by Commissioner Jimmy Miller.

During the meeting, the county received an update from William James, of Johnson Controls, on the performance contract his company has undertaken to cut utility costs for the county.

The program is part of a multi-year initiative to reduce energy costs and increase savings and efficiency in the county, according to Board Chair Eddie Harris. It is still in its infancy, James told the board, noting the installation of some equipment wasn't completed until earlier this year.

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